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A CLASSROOM GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF THE STATE

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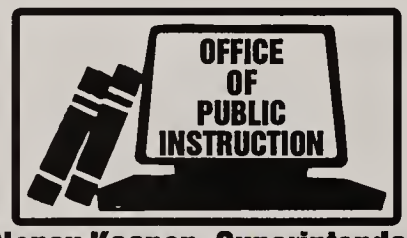
1994

Montana Historical Society



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THE SETTING

The word "Montana" derives from a Spanish term meaning "mountainous." It often has been called the "Treasure State," the "Land of Shining Mountains," and the "Big Sky Country." Montana is the fourth largest state in the Union (following Alaska, Texas, and California), comprising 147,046 sq. mi. (380,848 sq. km.) or 94,109,440 acres—a total that includes 1,657 sq. mi. (4,293 sq. km.) of inland water surface.

The state's greatest east-west distance is 559 mi. (900 km.), along its common boundary with Canada, and its greatest north-south distance is 321 mi. (517 km.). Montana is bounded by the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and Idaho, and by the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. The state capital is Helena.

Montana straddles two physiographic regions. Its eastern two-thirds lie in the northern Great Plains—characterized by generally treeless, gently rolling terrain broken by buttes, tree-bordered streams, and small isolated mountain ranges. Its western one-third lies in the northern Rocky Mountains—characterized by the Continental Divide, heavily forested mountain ranges, and interspersed river valleys. The highest point in the state is Granite Peak, 12,799 ft. (3,901 m.), situated near the Wyoming border. The lowest point, 1,800 ft. (549 m.), is located where the Kootenai River crosses the Idaho border.

Sources for three major watersheds rise in Montana: the Columbia River, flowing west into the Pacific Ocean; the Missouri-Mississippi Rivers, running east and south to the Gulf of Mexico; the Saskatchewan-Nelson drainage, flowing northeast to Hudson Bay. Triple Divide Peak, from which slopes waters flow in all three directions, is located in Glacier National Park.

The largest natural body of water in Montana is Flathead Lake, with 189 sq. mi. (490 sq. km.) of surface. The largest artificial lake is the reservoir created by Fort Peck Dam, with a surface of 383 sq. mi. (992 sq. km.). The state's 25 major dams (and thousands of smaller ones) provide electricity, irrigation, flood control and recreation. The federal government owns and administers about 37 percent of the land in Montana.

Montana's climate is classified as "dry continental," although there are great variations among areas because of differences in elevation in the state's size. Humidity is generally low, as is average annual precipitation: about 18 in. (455 mm.) west of the Continental Divide; approximately 13 in. (330 cm.) on the east side.

Western Montana's average temperatures in January of 20° F. (-7°C.) and in July of 64° F. (18° C.) are warmer in winter and cooler in summer than are eastern Montana's January average of 14° F. (-10° C.) and its July average of 71° F. (22° C.). Deep snows, extreme cold, strong winds, seasonal flooding, destructive hailstorms, and warm winter breezes (called "chinooks") can occur in various regions of the state.

POPULATION

Montana remains a state of relatively few people: it is ranked 44th among the 50 states. For example, the entire state holds fewer people (1990 federal census) than does the city of Phoenix, Arizona, or San Antonio, Texas, or San Diego, California. The 1990 census lists Montana with a total population of 779,065, or about 5.5 persons per square mile (the national average is 70 persons per square mile). Montana registered a total population gain of only 12, 375 (1.6 percent) between 1980 and 1990.

The 1990 federal census shows a general gain in population for the Rocky Mountain areas of western Montana and a general loss for the plains areas of eastern Montana. Montana's seven largest cities (1990 census) are: Billings, 81,151; Great Falls, 55,097; Missoula, 42,918; Butte, 33,336; Helena, 24,567; Bozeman, 22,660; Kalispell, 11,917. In these seven cities live almost 35 percent of all Montanans.

The historical development of Montana's population is shown in the following table:

1870:	20,595
1880:	39,159
1890:	142,924
1900:	243,329
1910:	376,053
1920:	548,889
1930:	537,606
1940:	559,456
1950:	591,024
1960:	674,767
1970:	694,409
1980:	786,690
1990:	799,065
1993 est.:	808,000

NATIONAL AND STATE FORESTS

Montana includes 11 national forests, 7 state forests, and 12 wilderness areas—totaling more than 17,000,000 acres of public land used for outdoor recreation, wildlife management, and natural-resources extraction. Although there are exceptions, this public forest land generally is located in the mountainous areas of central, southern, and western Montana. In all, Montana contains nearly 12,400,000 acres in 89 wildlands or

clusters of wildlands. In 1989, national forests in Montana alone logged 9,412,000 visitor days.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SITES

Glacier National Park, the nation's foremost trail park, is situated astride the Continental Divide, at its intersection with the Canadian boundary. Combined with its Canadian counterpart, this reserve is known as the "Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park." In addition, three of the five entrances to Yellowstone National Park (the oldest and largest national park in the country) are found in Montana. The state also includes the Big Hole National Battlefield, the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, and the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area.

STATE PARKS

Montana contains 89 state parks and monuments that protect natural, cultural, and recreational sites—in addition to the more than 300 state fishing-access sites, five recreational rivers, and several recreational roads and trails. The system encompasses more than 30,000 acres of protected properties. These facilities are found in every county in the state and are favorite sites for Montana residents and for out-of-state visitors alike.

INDIAN RESERVATIONS

Montana includes seven federally administered reservations for 11 Native American tribes. These reservations constitute more than 5,000,000 acres of land, on which live 55,158 of the state's natives (1990 census). Montana reservations, tribes, populations, and mailing addresses are shown in the following table.

Reservations	Tribes	1990 Populations	Post Offices
Flathead	Confederated Salish and Kootenai	21,259	Pablo (59855)

Blackfeet	Blackfeet	8,549	Browning (59417)
Rocky Boy	Chippewa and Cree	1,954	Box Elder (59521)
Fort Belknap	Assiniboine and Gros Ventres	2,508	Harlem (59526)
Fort Peck	Assiniboine and Sioux	10,595	Poplar (59255)
Crow	Crow	6,370	Crow Agency (59022)
Northern Cheyenne	Northern Cheyenne	3,923	Lame Deer (59043)

Montana also includes a number of reservation-less or "landless Indians," primarily of the Little Shell band and the Chippewa-Cree. Leaders of this group—who currently are seeking federal recognition as a formal tribe—can be reached through the post office in Box Elder (59521).

GOVERNMENT

Montana is governed by a state Constitution approved in 1972, which replaced its original 1889 Constitution. The new Constitution and a body of state laws are administered by Montana's executive officers and by various boards and commissions. The governor is elected for a four-year term and may be re-elected any number of times (although no Montana governor ever has served more than two consecutive terms). The governor holds a relatively strong veto power over proposed legislation.

The lieutenant governor, attorney general, auditor, secretary of state, and superintendent of public instruction also are elected for four-year terms. A copy of the Montana Constitution can be purchased for a small fee from: Secretary of State, State Capitol, Helena, MT (59620).

The Montana Legislature consists of a 50-member Senate and a 100-member House. Senators hold four-year terms, and House members serve two-year terms. Regular legislative sessions convene in January of odd-numbered years, for a maximum of 90 working days. Special sessions of the Legislature may be called by either the governor or the Legislature itself.

The highest court of appeals in Montana is the state Supreme Court, which consists of one chief justice and six associate justices—each elected to eight-year terms. The trial courts for major civil and criminal cases are the state's 20 district courts. These jurisdictions are presided over from one to four judges, each elected to a six-year term. Municipal courts, police courts, and justice-of-the-peace courts handle less serious cases.

Montana includes governments for 56 counties and for 126 incorporated cities and towns. Local government most frequently employs a three-member board of commissioners on a county level and a mayor-council form on a municipal level—although seven local governments operate under the commissioner-manager system, including five of the state's largest cities.

THE GOVERNORS OF MONTANA

GOVERNORS	PARTIES	TERMS
Joseph K. Toole	Democratic	1889-1893
John E. Rickards	Republican	1893-1897
Robert Burns Smith	Democratic	1897-1901
Joseph K. Toole	Democratic	1901-1908
Edwin L. Norris	Democratic	1908-1913
Samuel V. Stewart	Democratic	1913-1921
Joseph M. Dixon	Republican	1921-1925
John E. Erickson	Democratic	1925-1933
Frank H. Cooney	Democratic	1933-1935
W. Elmer Holt	Democratic	1935-1937
Roy E. Ayers	Democratic	1937-1941
Samuel C. Ford	Republican	1941-1949
John W. Bonner	Democratic	1949-1953
J. Hugo Aronson	Republican	1953-1961
Donald G. Nutter	Republican	1961-1962
Tim M. Babcock	Republican	1962-1969
Forrest H. Anderson	Democratic	1969-1973
Thomas L. Judge	Democratic	1973-1981
Ted Schwinden	Democratic	1981-1989
Stan Stephens	Republican	1989-1993
Marc Racicot	Republican	1993-

Montana now carries four Presidential electoral votes. Its current members of the U.S. Congress are Senators Max Baucus (D) and Conrad Burns (R) and Representative Pat Williams (D). Because of a relative population loss reflected in the 1990 census, Montana's Congressional Delegation was reduced (1993) to a single representative.

EDUCATION

In 1992, approximately 108,000 students attended Montana's almost 600 elementary schools (grades K-8), and almost 42,000 students were enrolled in the state's 170 high schools (grades 9-12). Montana also operates five postsecondary vocational-technical centers, located in Missoula, Butte, Helena, Great Falls, and Billings. In 1990, Montana graduated 85 percent of its high school students—the sixth highest percentage in the nation.

The State University System of Higher Education is composed of six units: Montana State University—Bozeman; University of Montana—Missoula; Montana State University—Billings; Western Montana College of the University of Montana (Dillon); Montana State University—Havre; Montana Tech of the University of Montana (Butte). In addition, three major private colleges operate in the state: Carroll College (Helena); College of Great Falls (Great Falls); Rocky Mountain College (Billings).

Three public community colleges also exist in the state: Dawson Community College (Glendive); Flathead Valley Community College (Kalispell); Miles Community College (Miles City).

Native American tribal councils offer higher education through community colleges established on each of Montana's seven reservations:

Reservation	**College**	**Location**
Rocky Boy	Stone Child College	Box Elder
Blackfeet	Blackfeet Community College	Browning
Crow	Little Big Horn Community College	Crow Agency
Fort Belknap	Fort Belknap College	Harlem
Northern Cheyenne	Dull Knife Memorial College	Lame Deer
Flathead	Salish-Kootenai Community College	Pablo
Fort Peck	Fort Peck Community College	Poplar

The state's expenditure for elementary and secondary-school education (1991) was $777,600,000—or about $5,184 per student, ranking it 21st among the 50 states.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Cultural life in Montana centers on the state's colleges and universities, with direction and support from the Montana Committee for the Humanities, the Montana Institute of the Arts, and the Montana Arts Council. Touring artists, public radio and public television (as well as the state's two networks of museums and libraries) tie Montana's dispersed communities together. Music, literature and creative art serve as focal points at all levels of the public education structure, and almost every community includes groups involved in musical and theatrical productions.

Montana offers more than 125 historical/art museums to the resident and the traveller alike. Outstanding museums and galleries include: the Montana Historical Society (Helena); the Museum of the Plains Indian (Browning); the Hockaday Center for the Arts (Kalispell); the C.M. Russell Museum and Gallery (Great Falls); Museum of the Rockies (Bozeman); the Western Heritage Center (Billings); the Missoula Museum of the Arts (Missoula); the World Museum of Mining (Butte); the Yellowstone Art Center (Billings).

Libraries in the state include 111 public, 93 academic/institutional, and 430 elementary/secondary-school facilities. Montana's largest libraries are located at its two state universities in Missoula and Bozeman.

THE ECONOMY

Historically, Montana's economy has relied heavily on the extraction/processing of its natural resources. Although attempts currently are being made to diversify the state's economic base (for example, by increasing its service and high-technology industries), natural resources remain the focus of Montana's economy.

In 1992, Montana contained a civilian labor force of 407,700 people, with a statewide unemployment rate of 6.7 percent. Montana's per-capita income (1990) was $15,110. Montana is one of only five states in the Union that currently does not levy a state sales tax.

TIMBER

Forests cover about 23,000,000 acres (9,300,000 hectares), or almost one-quarter of Montana. More than 14,000,000 acres (5,700,000 hectares) of this total are commercial forest. The manufacture of lumber and wood products is the state's leading industrial activity. Montana is one of the nation's top producers of softwood logs, most of which are processed into lumber at Montana sawmills. In 1987, the state cut almost 1,800,000,000 board feet of lumber; this figure has declined sharply in the early 1990s.

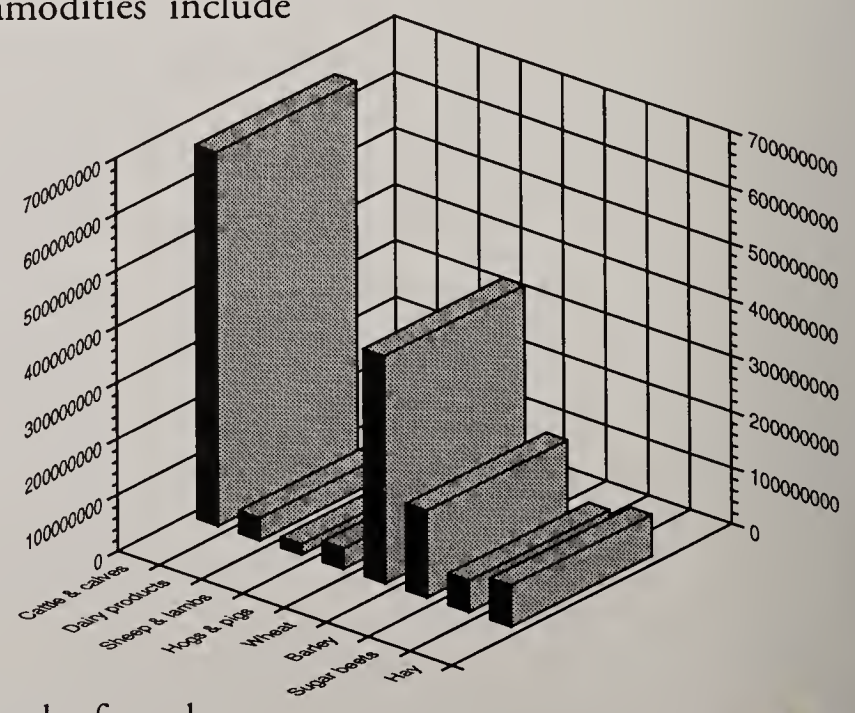
Related operations include the making of craft paper and plywood (700,000,000 square feet on a 3/8" basis), as well as the farming of Christmas trees (more than 4,200 in 1988). Montana's forest-products revenue for 1989 exceeded $8,239,000—but future lumber production will depend on the U.S. Congress resolving the wilderness-development issue for Montana's federal lands.

AGRICULTURE

In 1990, there were about 24,700 farms and ranches in Montana, working 60,203,993 acres. A proportion of Montana land currently included in farms and ranches is 64.7 percent. Large-scale farming is the rule, with the average operation involving 2,453 acres. Approximately 1,997,000 acres of Montana farmland are irrigated.

Cash receipts from the marketing of agricultural products totaled more than $1,851,269,000 in 1991. Of this total, $992,740,000 came from the sale of crops and $858,529,000 from the marketing of livestock and livestock-related products. Cash receipts from leading agricultural commodities include (1991):

cattle and calves:	$665,647,000
dairy products:	$39,954,000
sheep and lambs:	$19,086,000
hogs and pigs:	$36,845,000
wheat:	$406,097,000
barley:	$155,797,000
sugar beets:	$56,678,000
hay:	$73,738,000



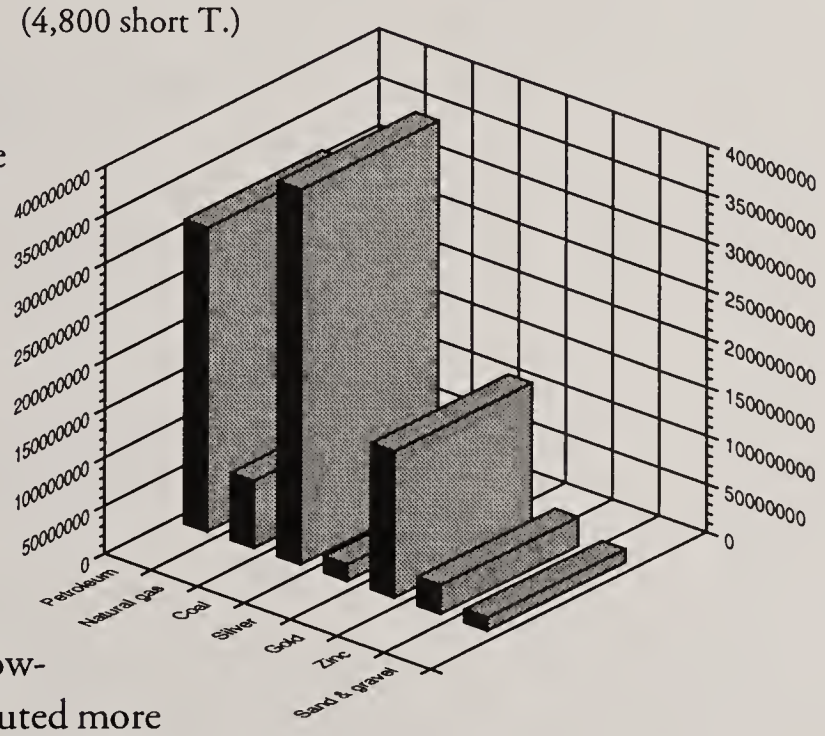
In 1992, Montanans ran 2,450,000 head of cattle, 24,000 milch cows, and 225,000 swine. The annual wool clip (1990) was 6,226,000 pounds from 690,000 head of sheep.

MINERAL PRODUCTION

Montana contains vast deposits of two important minerals—coal and petroleum. Its coal reserves are the largest in the nation, and its undeveloped oil and natural-gas holdings are equally impressive. The mountain ranges of central, southern and western Montana hold large ore deposits, including copper, gold, lead, silver, and zinc, in addition to other mineral reserves.

In 1990, the total value of the state's non-fuel mineral production was $568,000,000. The value of some leading minerals include (1992):

petroleum:	$313,733,490	(18,479,672 bbl.)
natural gas:	$69,921,193	(54,809,669 MCF.)
coal:	$387,480,000	(35,260,000 T.)
silver:	$17,315,000	(4,680,000 troy oz.)
gold:	$151,600,000	(379,000 troy oz.)
zinc:	$30,036,650	(122,635 MT.)
sand and gravel:	$13,700,000	(4,800 short T.)



Montana also is a national leader in the production of talc, vermiculite, platinum and palladium.

TOURISM

Travel by both state residents and out-of-state visitors is Montana's fastest-growing industry. In 1992, tourism contributed more than $900,000,000 to the state's economy. During the same year, about 6,400,000 out-of-state travellers visited Montana to enjoy its historic sites, hunting, fishing, hiking, skiing, and other activities that rely on its spectacular scenery and recreational resources. In 1992, tourism provided jobs for more than 17,000 Montanans.

OTHER INDUSTRIES

In 1991, contract construction in the state totalled $282,000,000, and in 1992 all manufacturing produced $1,121,000,000.

TRANSPORTATION

Montana incudes about 71,387 miles (114,860 km.) of roads, of which approximately 43,000 miles (68,800 km.) are surfaced. Because of the relatively great distances between its communities, the state is heavily dependent on automobile and commercial-trucking transportation. In 1991, Montana spent $105,520,000 in federal-aid highway funds on its roads.

Montana also contains 120 airports, with Billings, Bozeman and Great Falls operating as the primary commercial aviation centers. About 3,100 miles (4,988 km.) of railroad trackage (1992) provide freight and passenger service to the state.

COMMUNICATION

Montana relies on 11 daily and more than 80 non-daily newspapers for area and statewide coverage. The papers with the largest circulation are the Great Falls Tribune, the Billings Gazette, and the Missoulian. Montana also supports almost 100 radio stations (AM and FM) and 15 television stations, tied to the nation's broadcasting networks. The use of both cable television and satellite dishes is prevalent in Montana.

MONTANA FACTS

Montana Territory created	May 26, 1864
State of Montana created	November 8, 1889; 41st state in the Union
Nicknames	"Treasure State" and "Big Sky Country"
State motto	*Oro y plata* (Spanish: "gold and silver")
State capital	Helena (1990 population: 24,569)
Size	147,046 sq. mi. (4th largest of the 50 states)
Highest point	Granite Peak: 12,799 ft.
Lowest point	Kootenai River on the Idaho border: 1,800 ft.
Record high temperature	117° F at Glendive on July 20, 1893, and at Medicine Lake on July 5, 1937
Record low temperature	-70° F at Rogers Pass on January 24, 1954
Population	799,065 (1990 census); 44th of the 50 states

Symbols of Montana

State Seal (Established in 1893)

A depiction of mountains, plains, forests and the Great Falls of the Missouri River. The plow, pick, and shovel represent the state's industry. The state motto appears on a ribbon.

State Flag (1905)

The state seal on a field of blue; the word MONTANA added (1981)

State Flower (1895)

Bitterroot (*Lewisia redevia*)

State Bird (1931)

Western Meadow Lark (*Sturnella-neglecta*: Audubon)

State Tree (1949)

Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*)

State Gem Stones (1969)

Montana sapphires; Montana agates

State Grass (1973)

Bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*—pursh)

State Fish (1977)

Blackspotted (West slope) cutthroat trout (*Salmo clarki*)

State Animal (1983)

Grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*)

State Fossil (1985)

Duck-billed dinosaur (*Maiasaura peeble-sorum*)

State Song (1910)

"Montana," with words by Charles C. Cohen and music by Joseph E. Howard

State Ballad (1983)

"Montana Melody," with words and music by Carleen and LeGrande Harvey

Montana Timeline

80,000,000-60,000,000 B.C.:	Dinosaurs die off in Montana
2,000,000-20,000 B.C.:	Series of glacial ice sheets cover portions of Montana
15,000-13,000 B.C.:	Asiatic peoples migrate over land bridge to Montana
8000-6500 B.C.:	Prehistoric peoples develop communal hunting techniques in Montana
6500 B.C.-1500 A.D.:	Prehistoric peoples populate all areas of Montana
1500:	Europeans reach North America and begin to displace native peoples
1680:	Montana natives acquire the horse
1720:	Montana natives acquire the gun
1805-1806:	Lewis and Clark Expedition crosses and recrosses Montana
1807:	Manuel Lisa builds first fur fort in Montana on the Yellowstone River
1828:	Fort Union, an American Fur Company post, is built at the mouth of the Yellowstone River
1841:	Father Pierre Jean de Smet establishes St. Mary's Mission in the Bitterroot Valley
1853:	Johnny Grant starts the first beef herd in the Deer Lodge Valley
1857:	First sheep ranching begins in the Bitterroot Valley
1860:	First steamboat reaches Fort Benton
1862:	Placer miners rush to gold strike on Grasshopper Creek (Bannack)

1864:	Vigilantes hang Henry Plummer and other "Innocents"; Congress creates Montana Territory; first newspaper, the Montana Post, published in Virginia City
1870:	Open-range cattle industry begins on Montana prairies
1872:	Congress creates Yellowstone National Park
1876:	Custer's command is annihilated at the Battle of the Little Big Horn
1877:	Significant copper mining begins in Butte; Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce retreat across Montana
1880:	Utah and Northern Railroad enters Montana
1883:	Northern Pacific Railroad is completed through Montana: Marcus Daly establishes the town of Anaconda and its smelting works
1889:	Montana joins the Union as the 41st state
1890:	First hydroelectric dam is built in Great Falls
1893:	Great Northern Railway is completed through Montana
1894:	Helena wins election to determine the permanent capital of Montana
1896:	Populism (and later, Progressivism) becomes a significant factor in Montana politics
1902:	Montana Capitol is completed
1903:	Amalgamated Copper Company paralyzes the state's economy with the shut-down to force legislative relief
1909:	Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad ("Milwaukee Road") is completed through Montana
1910:	Congress establishes Glacier National Park; forest fires devastate western Montana
1910-1918:	Homesteading boom peaks on Montana's plains

1911-1925:	"County busting" craze creates 25 new Montana counties
1914:	Montana women receive the franchise
1916:	Jeannette Rankin elected the first woman in the U.S. Congress
1917:	Rankin votes against U.S. entry into World War I; Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) organizer Frank Little is lynched in Butte
1919:	First of severe agricultural depressions (extending into the early 1940s) begins in Montana; oil is discovered in the Cat Creek field
1921:	Wave of bank failures begins in Montana
1922:	KDYS (Great Falls), Montana's first licensed radio station, broadcasts
1923:	Jack Dempsey-Tommy Gibbons world heavyweight championship fight is staged in Shelby
1926:	Montana artist Charlie Russell dies in Great Falls
1930:	Significant tourist industry begins in Montana
1933:	Construction of Fort Peck Dam begins; scores of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps are established across Montana
1935:	Works Progress Administration (WPA) beings projects in Montana; series of severe earthquakes hits central Montana
1936:	Rural Electrification Administration (REA) begins work in Montana
1941:	Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin votes against U.S. entry into World War II
1943:	Smith Mine disaster kills 70 coal miners
1950:	Great Falls replaces Butte as Montana's largest city
1951:	Petroleum boom begins in eastern Montana
1952:	Mike Mansfield is first elected to the U.S. Senate

1953:	KOOK-TV (Billings, Montana's first licensed television station, broadcasts
1955:	Aluminum plant begins processing in Columbia Falls; Berkeley Pit copper operation starts in Butte
1956:	Construction of the federal interstate highway system begins in Montana
1959:	Severe earthquakes hit upper Madison Valley
1961:	Malmstrom Air Force Base (Great Falls) becomes site of the nation's first ICBM missile command
1964:	Congress passes federal Wilderness Act
1967:	Bell Creek petroleum field is discovered and developed; longest and costliest strike in Montana history runs in Butte
1968:	Yellowtail Dam is completed; work begins on Libby Dam
1969:	Large-scale strip mining of coal begins at Colstrip
1970:	Consolidation creates the Burlington Northern Railroad
1972:	Montana's electorate approves a new constitution
1975:	Underground mining ceases in Butte
1976:	Mike Mansfield retires from the U.S. Senate, becomes U.S. ambassador to Japan
1980:	Anaconda Company announces the closing of its Montana operations; Billings replaces Great Falls as Montana's largest city; fallout from Mount St. Helens volcanic eruption blankets Montana
1981:	"Milwaukee Road" declares bankruptcy
1982:	Copper-mining operations cease at Butte's Berkeley Pit
1986:	Limited underground mining resumes in Butte; some high-tech gold mining reopens in Montana mountains

1987: Burlington Northern sells a major portion of its Montana trackage to Montana Rail Link; last gaps in the federal interstate highway system are completed

1988: U.S. and Canada initiate a Free-Trade Agreement, directly affecting Montana's economy; large forest fires sweep areas of a drought-stricken Montana and Yellowstone National Park

1989: Montana celebrates its statehood centennial

1990: Montana's timber-industry income declines, while gains occur in tourism and specialized mining

1991: Riot at State Prison in Deer Lodge results in five deaths

1992: As a result of the 1990 federal census, Montana loses one of its two representatives in Congress; two incumbents oppose each other for the remaining seat; Attorney General Marc Racicot (R) defeats legislator Dorothy Bradley (D) for governor's office

1993: Robert Redford's film, "A River Runs Through It," sparks increased tourism and immigration to Montana; a generally wet summer produces record agricultural harvests

A Brief History of Montana

by G. Thomas Foggin and Harry W. Fritz

This is a portion of the essay on "Montana" that appears in: THE WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA—1988 EDITION. Volume 13—"M," pp. 746-765. Chicago: World Book; 1987.

INDIAN DAYS

The mountains in the west were the home of the Bannock, Flathead, Kalispell, Kootenai, and Shoshone tribes.

EXPLORATION

French trappers may have visited the Montana area as early as the 1740s. The American explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark led their expedition across Montana to the Pacific Coast in 1805. They returned in 1806 and explored parts of Montana both going and coming. After 1807, fur traders became active throughout Montana. In 1841, Jesuit missionaries established St. Mary's Mission, the first attempt at a permanent settlement, near what is now Stevensville. In 1847, the American Fur Company built Fort Benton on the Missouri River. The town that formed there is Montana's oldest continuously populated town.

The United States got most of what is now Montana as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The northwestern part was gained by treaty with Great Britain in 1846. At various times, parts of Montana were in the territories of Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, Dakota, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

THE GOLD RUSH

In 1862, prospectors found gold in Grasshopper Creek in southwestern Montana. Other gold strikes followed, and wild mining camps grew around the gold fields. These included Bannack, Diamond City, Virginia City, and others.

The mining camps had almost no effective law enforcement. Finally, the citizens took the law into their own hands. One famous incident involved the two biggest gold camps—Bannack and Virginia City. The settlers learned that their sheriff, Henry Plummer, was actually an outlaw leader. The men of Bannack and Virginia City formed a vigilance committee to rid themselves of the outlaws. These vigilantes hanged Plummer in January 1864. They adopted as their symbol the numbers "3-7-77." These numbers may have represented the dimensions of a grave: 3 feet wide, by 7 feet long, by 77 inches deep. Many outlaws were hanged or driven from Montana by the vigilantes.

A large number of early prospectors came from the South, particulary from Confederate Army units that broke up early in the Civil War (1861-1865). One of the major gold fields was called Confederate Gulch, because three Southerners found the first gold there.

During the boom years, gold dust was the principal money. For example, missionaries did not pass collection plates at church services. They passed a tin cup for gold dust. Chinese laundrymen even found gold in their wash water after they washed the miner's clothing.

Sidney Edgerton, an Idaho official, saw the need for better government of the wild mining camps. At the time, Montana was part of Idaho Territory. Edgerton wrote to Washington, D.C., urging the creation of a new territory. Montana became a territory on May 26, 1864, and Edgerton served as its first governor.

THE CATTLE INDUSTRY

Cattle raising began in Montana in the mid-1850s, when Richard Grant, a trader, brought the first herd to the area from Oregon. In 1866, Nelson Story, a cattleman, drove a thousand longhorn cattle from Texas to Montana. Story's herd started the Montana cattle industry in earnest. The coming of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1883 opened the way to the eastern markets and caused even more growth. But disaster struck the cattle industry in the bitterly cold winter of 1886-1887. Cattle died by the thousands in howling blizzards and frigid temperatures. Ranching continued after this, but on a smaller, more careful, basis.

INDIAN FIGHTING

Two of the most famous Indian campaigns in American history were fought in Montana Territory. On June 25, 1876, Sioux and Cheyenne Indians wiped out part of the 7th Cavalry Regiment under Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer. This famous battle,

known as "Custer's Last Stand," was fought near the Little Bighorn River in southeastern Montana.

The last serious Indian fighting in Montana started when the U.S. government tried to move the Nez Perce Indians from their lands in Oregon. Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce led his tribe toward Canada through Montana. The Indians and U.S. troops fought several small battles in Idaho, and then a two-day battle at the Big Hole in southwestern Montana. Troops under Colonel Nelson A. Miles captured Chief Joseph's Indians about 40 miles (64 km.) from the Canadian boundary in October 1877.

STATEHOOD

Between 1880 and 1890, the population of Montana grew from about 39,000 to nearly 143,000. The people of Montana first asked for statehood in 1884, but they had to wait five years. Finally, Montana was admitted as the 41st state on November 8, 1889. Joseph K. Toole of Helena became the first state governor.

Much of Montana's growth during the 1880s and 1890s came because of the mines at Butte. The earliest mines produced gold. Then silver was discovered in the rock ledges of the Butte Hill. Later, miners found rich veins of copper. Miners came to Butte from Ireland, England and other areas of Europe. Smelters were built, and more men were hired to operate them. The Butte Hill became known as "the Richest Hill on Earth."

Marcus Daly and William A. Clark led the development of Butte copper, and they controlled many of the richest mines. The two men became rivals in both business and politics. The great wealth produced by the mines gave both men great power. Daly built the town of Anaconda, and he spent large sums of money in a campaign to make it the state capital. Clark opposed Daly's plan, and the voters picked Helena as the capital (1894).

Clark wanted to be a U.S. Senator, but Daly opposed him. In the campaign of 1899, Clark was accused of bribery. He won, but resigned rather than face an investigation by a U.S. Senate committee. Two years later, Clark won his Senate seat in a second election. He was helped by F. Augustus Heinze, another mine owner. Heinze had arrived in Butte long after Daly and Clark became millionaires. But Heinze became wealthy through the clever use of mining law and court suits.

First Daly, then the others sold their properties to a single corporation, which became the Anaconda Company. The Company organized an electric power company, built a railroad, and constructed dams. It also controlled forests, banks, and newspapers. Anaconda became so important in the life of the state that Montanans referred to it simply as "The Company."

PROGRESS AS A STATE

During the early 1900s, Montana made increasing use of its natural resources. New dams harnessed the state's rivers, providing water for irrigation and electric power for industry. The extension of the railroads assisted the processing industries. New plants refined sugar, milled flour, and processed meat. In 1910, Congress created Glacier National Park, which became an attraction for tourists.

Jeannette Rankin of Missoula was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1916. She was the first woman to serve in Congress. She won fame in 1941 as the only member of Congress to vote against U.S. entry into World War II. Rankin said she did not believe in war and would not vote for it.

DEPRESSION YEARS

Montana suffered during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Demand for the state's metals dropped because of the nationwide lag in production. Drought contributed to the drop in farm income, brought on by the depression.

However, state and federal programs continued to develop Montana's resources during the 1930s. The building of the giant Fort Peck Dam helped provide jobs. Completion of the dam in 1940 provided badly needed water for irrigation. Other projects included insect control, irrigation, rural electrification, and soil conservation. The construction of parks, recreation areas, and roads also continued under government direction. In 1940, Montana voters elected Republican Sam C. Ford of Helena as governor. He was only the third Republican state governor to that point in Montana history.

THE MID-1900s

Montana's economy boomed during World War II (1939-1945). The state's meat, timber, and grain were in great demand, and its copper and other metals were used in the war effort. After the war, lower prices for grain reduced agricultural income. Many people moved from farming areas to towns and cities to find jobs. Some small farming towns were abandoned.

Montana's petroleum industry expanded rapidly in the early 1950s, when major oil fields were discovered in the Williston Basin along the Montana-North Dakota border. Wells in the new Montana fields began pumping oil in 1951. In 1955, the Anaconda

Aluminum Company opened a $65 million plant in northwestern Montana, and aluminum products became important to the state's economy. During the 1960s, Anaconda spent more than $50 million to improve operations at the Butte mines and to make better use of the remaining ore there.

Tourism grew as an important source of income in Montana after World War II. The state developed more parks and historic sites, and private developers opened dude ranches, summer resorts, and skiing centers. Such ski areas as Big Mountain, near Whitefish, and Big Sky, south of Bozeman, helped extend the tourist season through the winter.

The state's irrigation and water conservation programs were also expanded. In 1966, Yellowtail Dam on the Bighorn River in southeastern Montana was completed. This dam provides water for electric power, irrigation, and recreation. Work began in 1967 on the $375 million Libby Dam hydroelectric project on the Kootenai River in Northwestern Montana. The power plant there began operation in 1975; the project was completed in 1984.

Republicans held the governorship through most of the 1950s and 1960s. However, all of the governors elected between 1968 and 1988 were Democrats—until, in 1989, a Republican returned to the governorship.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In 1972, Montana voters narrowly approved a new state Constitution. The Constitution went into effect in 1973. In 1993, based on a relative loss of population, Montana relinquished one of its two seats in the House of Representatives.

Montana's gas, oil, and coal industries expanded rapidly during the 1970s, when an energy shortage developed in the United States. Coal production increased sharply, from less than 3 million to more than 30 million tons per year. Huge, open-pit strip mines operated at Colstrip and other southeastern Montana sites. The Montana Power Company built four coal-burning, electric power plants at Colstrip. A 30 percent coal severance tax contributed needed funds to the state. But, in the early 1980s, fuel prices fell, and Montana's production leveled off.

Montana's traditionally important industries experienced major difficulties during the mid-1980s. Farmers suffered hardships brought on by drought, low farm product prices, and reduced sales to foreign markets. The lumber industry cut fewer logs than in the past, and the U.S. Forest Service offered many fewer timber sales to loggers. In addition, the mining industry lost thousands of jobs. The Anaconda Company, once the leading mining company in the state, withdrew from Montana in the early 1980s.

Montana, today, remains a state rich in natural resources. But state leaders seek to broaden Montana's economy by attracting small business and by promoting electronics and other advanced-technology ventures. The Science and Technology Alliance, created in 1985, looks for new uses for raw materials. The state is also working to expand its tourist industry, taking advantage of such recent publicity boons as the films "Lonesome Dove," "Dances With Wolves," and "A River Runs Through It." Many topics in the conservation-vs.-development argument continue to focus the attention of Montanans.

Some Famous Montanans

ARTS/ACTING/MUSIC/MEDIA

Dirk Benedict—TV actor
Judith Blegan—opera soprano
Gary Cooper—movie actor
Patrick Duffy—TV actor
Chet Huntley—TV newsman
Myrna Loy—movie actress
Stan Lynde—cartoonist
George Montgomery—movie actor
Brent Musberger—TV sports announcer
Edgar S. Paxson—artist
Charlie Pride—country-and-western singer
Martha Raye—singer
Charles M. Russell—artist
Michael Smuin—choreographer
Peter Voulkos—ceramic artist

POLITICIANS

Mike Mansfield—U.S. Senator; ambassador
Lee Metcalf—U.S. Senator
Jeannette Rankin—first woman in the U.S. House
Thomas J. Walsh—U.S. Senator
Burton K. Wheeler—U.S. Senator

SPORTS

Larry Krystkowiak—NBA basketball player
Dave McNally—baseball player
John "Misha" Petkevich—figure skater
Mike Ramos—Olympic decathlete
Lones Wigger—Olympic marksman

LITERATURE

Mary Clearman Blew—author; poet
Grace Stone Coates—author; poet
Ivan Doig—author
A.B. Guthrie, Jr.—author
Joseph Kinsey Howard—author
Dorothy M. Johnson—author
William Kitteredge—author; poet
Norman Maclean—author
Tom McGuane—author
James Welch—author; poet

MISCELLANEOUS

Tony Boyle—labor leader
William A. Clark—entrepreneur
Plenty Coups—Crow leader
Marcus Daly—entrepreneur
John R. Horner—dinosaur paleontologist
Henry Plummer—sheriff; outlaw
Howard Ricketts—disease scientist
Lester Thurow—economist
Harold C. Urey—Nobel Prize-winning scientist
Robert Yellowtail—Crow Reservation leader

Additional biographical information on these people can be found at your local public library—in such reference works as WHO'S WHO, the DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY, the WORLD ALMANAC, etc.

For Further Reading

American Geographic Publishing: MONTANA GEOGRAPHIC SERIES. 19 volumes, Helena: A&WGP; 1981-1993.

I. MONTANA MOUNTAIN RANGES
II. EASTERN MONTANA
III. MONTANA WILDLIFE
IV. GLACIER COUNTRY
V. WESTERN MONTANA
VI. GREATER YELLOWSTONE
VII. BEARTOOTH COUNTRY
VIII. MONTANA'S MISSOURI RIVER
IX. MONTANA'S EXPLORERS
X. MONTANA'S YELLOWSTONE RIVER
XI. MONTANA'S INDIANS
XII. MONTANA'S CONTINENTAL DIVIDE
XIII. EASTERN MONTANA'S MOUNTAIN RANGES
XIV. MONTANA'S FLATHEAD COUNTRY
XV. MONTANA'S HOMESTEAD ERA
XVI. MONTANA WILDLANDS
XVII. MONTANA PORTRAIT (combines II and V)
XVIII. MONTANA FARM AND RANCH LIFE
XIX. MONTANA BACKROADS

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Montana Historical Society Staff. NOT IN PRECIOUS METALS ALONE: A MANUSCRIPT HISTORY OF MONTANA. Helena: Montana Historical Society; 1976.

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West, Carroll Van. A TRAVELER'S COMPANION TO MONTANA HISTORY. Helena: Montana Historical Society; 1986.

Wolle, Muriel. MONTANA PAY DIRT: A GUIDE TO THE MINING CAMPS OF THE TREASURE STATE. Athens, Ohio: Sage; 1963/1983.

For a free Museum Store catalog that contains many of the above-listed works, write to: Montana Historical Society, 225 North Roberts Street, Helena, Montana (59620).

For Further Information

Additional information of a more specific nature can be obtained by writing to the following offices:

GOVERNOR:

Governor Marc Racicot
Office of the Governor
PO Box 200801
Helena, Montana 59620-0801

ECONOMY:

Census and Economic Information
Department of Commerce
PO Box 200505
Helena, Montana 59620-0505

EDUCATION:

Superintendent Nancy Keenan
Office of Public Instruction
PO Box 202501
Helena, Montana 59620-2501

GOVERNMENT:

Montana Legislative Council
PO Box 201706
Helena, Montana 59620-1706

HISTORY:

Montana Historical Society
PO Box 201201
Helena, Montana 59620-1201

TOURISM:

Travel Montana
Department of Commerce
PO Box 200533
Helena, Montana 59620-0533